



PRESS RELEASE

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MEXICAN MAN SENTENCED TO OVER 7 YEARS FOR HOSTAGE TAKING

TUCSON, Ariz. – Fausto Vargas-Cruz, DOB 9/10/55, a legal permanent U.S. resident born in Mexico City, Mexico, was sentenced today to 87 months in prison by U.S. District Judge Frank R. Zapata in Tucson federal court. Vargas-Cruz was one of 11 defendants originally charged in a 21-count indictment.

On June 7, 2004, Vargas-Cruz pleaded guilty to one count of Conspiracy to Commit Hostage Taking in violation of Title 18, U.S. Code, Section 1203.

On September 6, 2002, Vargas-Cruz, along with 48 other illegal aliens, was apprehended by U.S. Border Patrol agents at an illegal alien stash house located at 4002 South 12th Avenue in Tucson, Ariz. Vargas-Cruz rented the stash house and directed his co-conspirators to record the names of the illegal aliens in a ledger and to assist them in making phone calls to their friends or relatives to secure payment for their transportation to their final destination in the United States. Vargas-Cruz admitted that he was in charge of the stash house and told the illegal aliens that they were not allowed to leave the house until payment could be secured via Western Union for their transport from Tucson, Ariz. Based on ledgers found in the stash house and Western Union receipts, Vargas-Cruz personally retrieved over \$230,000 as part of this hostage taking conspiracy.

The investigation in this case was conducted by Special Agents of the U.S. Border Patrol. The prosecution was handled by Jeffrey H. Jacobson, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

CASE NUMBER: CR-03-0033 TUC-FRZ
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